

175
648

Artibonite and Tombe rivers just outside the town. Today Cacos who went through this campaign will tell how sniping was carried on from the "English fort" on the heights to the east of the town and will recount how dangerous it was made for Marines to go unguarded even to the river-banks to draw water. Yet after two or three years the overthrow of the Caco forces brought peace once more to Mirebalais. And while the intervention of the United States has caused significant changes in the larger aspects of Haitian economy and in the political life of the Republic as a whole, yet as concerns the inner life of the people of this valley it seems to have passed without any discernible effect.

175
211

Today in the place are found three records of its past. The first of these, in the middle of the square, is a tall palm tree, which in Haiti is the emblem of its attainment of freedom and independence, and near it a rostrum symbolizing the authority of the central government. The second is the tomb of an overlord of Mirebalais when independent Haiti was not a republic. In florid lettering can be read the tribute engraved on its top:

211
175
764

Ici

Dort de l'éternel sommeil

Pierre Cazimir de Vincent

décédé le 13 Août 1856, à l'âge de 71 ans

de son vivant Duc de Mirebalais

et

Commandant de la 4ème Division

Militaire de la Province de

l'Ouest

*"Passant, si tu admires les vertus militaires;
Révère les cendres de celui que repose en ce lieu."*

*De la part de son amie
Delphonnaise Delva.*

THE VALLEY OF MIREBALAIS

13

The third is a realistic reminder of the most recent occupation of the valley by foreign forces. Cut so deeply into the "tree of liberty" that not even the red and blue paint of the national colors with which its base is repainted annually can conceal it, and contrasting with the ornate inscription on the near-by tomb, is the following legend:

L. MARLOW
AUG. 18, 1920.
U. S. M. C.
DRUNK
AS
HELL

J. F. BROWN

175
211 ●

66 *Services for the Loa*

184 the gate, and the crossroads, is not regarded in the same light as the other
 776 loa but as a messenger and interceder, and as the crossroads protector. He it is who helps in the placation of the major gods, and who guards people against accident, chance, and evil spirits on the highway.

796 In traditional form, services for Mait' Grand Bois and Femme Grand
 782 Bois are conducted by the family without the aid of a houngan, under
 796 the direction of the oldest male member of the family. The rites begin on a Thursday. With a tiny bell in his hand, the elder who directs the service (he is called *grand famille*) calls upon Mait' Grand Bois to come and receive his feast. The procedures are solemn. The grand
 [787] *famille* and the family sing. At last Grand Bois enters the head of the old man who is conducting the rites. Then the sacrificial animals are brought forward and killed, and the women take the meat and begin the cooking of the mangé. While the food is cooking, the family sits and waits. Sometimes the grand *famille* begins a song, in which others join. The cooking takes a long while. Sometime during the night, when the food is ready, it is placed in two baskets—one for Mait' Grand Bois and one for his wife, Femme' Grand Bois. Into each basket goes meat, corn meal, rice, bread, cookies, peanut cakes, cassava, and other delicacies. The two baskets are hung by ropes from the roof of the tonnelle, or from the branch of a tree. During the entire night, none of the family eats. Mait' Grand Bois and his wife partake of the feast as they please. At six o'clock in the morning, the baskets are taken down, and the family is free to eat what the loa have left for them.

When the food is gone, the bones that are left are carried to a nearby stream and washed until they are white and shining. The bones are then placed in a large calabash bowl. Sweet-scented leaves from special trees are placed in the bowl with the bones, and water is added. The
 [783] mixture becomes a ritual lotion, or "bath." The entire family kneels before the liquid, which they rub on their faces, heads, arms, hands, legs, and feet. When the ritual bathing is over, they sing:

[539] La famille vin' payé sang,
 La famille vin' payé sang.
 Cérémonie là c'est fini! [Ex. 41]

The family comes to pay blood,
 The family comes to pay blood,
 The ceremony is finished!

Afterward, each member of the family places a small coin in the calabash dish with the bones and leaves, and the residue is then buried in a deep hole at a crossroads. A heavy post (*borne*) is erected at the site, with
 [217] markings to indicate the date of the service, and the numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, each representing a year. Every year one of the numbers is checked off, and at the end of four years another service for Mait' Grand Bois and Femme Grand Bois is held.